

Student Subsidies

The group appointed by the President to recommend a method of handling the student subsidies hitherto secretly dispensed by the CIA has quite understandably found itself with a difficult assignment.

It is one thing to agree that the CIA should not be covertly subsidizing student groups that are engaged in foreign student organization activities. But to perfect an alternative method is not a simple matter. All of the plans which the commission is studying seem to contemplate the publicized endowment of student groups either by state, the foreign aid program or a quasi-public corporation or commission. The scale of the endeavor favored by members seems to run from \$5 million to \$25 million a year.

An independent agency or corporation free from the policy strictures of the State Department or other executive departments and operated on a fairly generous scale looks like the best solution. Its grantees will not be totally free from the taint of Government sponsorship—but they will be on a footing as good as that of students of other countries who have long been objects of such benevolence. The public agency contemplated will not be able to carry on the covert subversion of international student groups, opinion of which might be influenced by secret subventions. This will be a self-imposed disadvantage but it may be a lesser disaster than the periodic embarrassment of having secret help divulged. The commission ought to hurry up its report, wind up its work and set on foot a new system operating on a scale acceptable to its members.